



# PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate jumped from 7.8 percent in February to 8.6 percent in March, following the closure of the Sunshine Mine near Kellogg and a few layoffs at several lumber, electronics, and retail employers. Spring break-up was in full force in March, so load limitations and closures of muddy forest roads kept many loggers out of the woods. In addition, layoffs by Spokane employers put some Panhandle residents out of work.

The losses of 210 silver mining jobs and 370 *Lumber & Wood Products* jobs explain why the unemployment rate in March 2001 was five-tenths of a percentage point higher than in the same month the year before. Although electronics firms, durable goods manufacturers, temporary employment firms, catalog companies, and developers of software and Internet applications laid off workers in the last few months, their recent job losses have not erased the gains they made before the economy began slowing. Therefore, their employment levels in March 2001 were slightly higher than their employment levels in March 2000.

Although the economic news was generally gloomy, Kootenai County had one highly promising event to celebrate. Center Partners added 300 *Service* jobs between February and March, when it opened a customer service center in Coeur d'Alene. Center Partners expects to hire another 200 workers before the end of June. The Coeur d'Alene center serves a single client—AT&T Broadband. From their office at 1201 Ironwood Drive, Center Partner employees answer customer questions about AT&T Broadband services.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Bonner County

- Dewey and Maxine Kock recently opened Dewey's New & Used at 1410 N. Boyer Avenue in Sandpoint.

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	90,190	89,580	87,380	0.7	3.2
Unemployed	7,800	6,980	7,040	11.7	10.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.6	7.8	8.1		
Total Employment	82,390	82,600	80,340	-0.3	2.6
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	89,500	88,520	86,600	1.1	3.3
Unemployed	10,540	9,840	9,590	7.1	9.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	11.8	11.1	11.1		
Total Employment	78,960	78,680	77,010	0.4	2.5
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>					
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	13,160	13,410	13,500	-1.9	-2.5
Mining	790	940	1,000	-16.0	-21.0
Construction	4,020	3,930	3,980	2.3	1.0
Manufacturing	8,350	8,540	8,520	-2.2	-2.0
Lumber & Wood Products	3,760	3,960	4,130	-5.1	-9.0
All Other Manufacturing	4,590	4,580	4,390	0.2	4.6
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	51,220	50,930	49,670	0.6	3.1
Transportation	1,430	1,430	1,300	0.0	10.0
Communication & Utilities	1,070	1,060	1,080	0.9	-0.9
Wholesale Trade	2,210	2,220	2,230	-0.5	-0.9
Retail Trade	14,440	14,480	14,240	-0.3	1.4
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,520	2,500	2,430	0.8	3.7
Service & Miscellaneous	16,240	15,990	15,560	1.6	4.4
Government Administration	7,710	7,640	7,460	0.9	3.4
Government Education	5,600	5,610	5,370	-0.2	4.3

\* Preliminary estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

The store offers a wide variety of items including power tools, welding torches, telephones, radios, clothing, glassware, and household items.

- Co-Op Energy LLC, a joint venture of Sandpoint's electric utility Northern Lights and Co-Op Country Store, recently opened to sell and distribute propane in Bonner, Boundary, and Kootenai counties. The propane company is located at 125 Tibbetts Lane in Sandpoint.
- Art: Heart & Soul opened at the Bonner Mall in Ponderay. The gallery's owner, Patrick Yesh, provides gallery and studio space for artists, teaches painting and drawing classes, offers massage therapy, and presents seminars on creativity and health.
- Nina Deabenderfer recently opened T & N Siding Supply Co. at 4200 McGhee Road, Building #6, in Sandpoint. The new business sells vinyl siding, windows, and related products.
- Verizon is closing its Sandpoint phone mart at the end of May. The retail and payment center, which employs three people, is one of eight phone centers Verizon is closing in the Northwest.

## **Kootenai County**

- Parrott Mechanical, the Panhandle's largest construction firm, laid off 75 employees in April. Prior to the layoff, Parrott employed more than 200 people at 6600 N. Government Way in Coeur d'Alene. It also has offices in Sandpoint and Osburn. After a change in ownership, its parent company decided that Parrott should focus on its core services of heating and cooling. In recent years, Parrott also has provided plumbing and electrical service. In addition, residential work formerly handled by Parrott's North Idaho offices now will be handled by the Spokane office of its parent company, Service Express.
- Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway started construction of its \$30 million locomotive refueling depot at Hauser Lake near Rathdrum. Lydig Construction Co., of Spokane, is the main contractor for the construction project that is expected to employ 150 people. When the depot opens in early 2003, it will employ up to 75 people.
- Coeur d'Alene Mayor Steve Judy and his wife Michelle are preparing for the May 19 grand opening of Adventures 'n Fun, a two-acre entertainment complex with an 18-hole miniature golf course, a carousel, a play castle, laser tag, bouncing pads, bumper cars, robotic entertainers, and a wide variety of games. The entertainment complex's 60 employees will wear safari garb in keeping with the jungle motif. Round Table Pizza will cater meals at Adventures 'n Fun, located near Highway 95 in north Coeur d'Alene.
- A \$4 million reconstruction of Coeur d'Alene Airport's main runway recently began and will be completed by late fall. During the construction at the airport owned by Kootenai County airplanes will use a second, shorter runway.
- Hecla Mining, based in Coeur d'Alene, recently sold its industrial minerals division, which primarily mined ball clay and Kaolin. Hecla decided to concentrate on silver and gold, which it mines at the Lucky Friday mine in Shoshone County, and underground mines in Alaska and Venezuela. Approximately 75 people work at Hecla's corporate headquarters across Highway 95 from the Silver Lake Mall.
- Kootenai County recently welcomed these new businesses: Rent-a-Center, a 4,700-square-foot store that rents and sells home furnishings, electronics, and appliances, at 101 Appleway in Coeur d'Alene; Comet, a 1,020-square-foot store selling men's and women's clothing at the Silver Lake Mall in Coeur d'Alene; Aspen Sound, a car stereo store at 350 Cherry Lane in Coeur d'Alene; R & D Towing Service, a 24-hour towing and mobile welding business,

in Athol; Westwood Gardens, a nursery selling trees, plants, and garden art, located behind Super 1 Foods in Rathdrum; Idaho Joe's, a second-hand store featuring furnishings, household items, and collectibles from the 1950s through the 1970s, at 810 N. Fourth Street in Coeur d'Alene; and a Great Harvest Bakery franchise, specializing in whole-grain breads, at 2106 N. Government Way.

## **Shoshone County**

- A Papa Murphy's take-and-bake pizza shop opened in late March at 403 Bunker Avenue in downtown Kellogg. The business, owned by George and Nelda House, employs three people.
- The Bank of Latah plans to open a branch in Wallace late this spring. Established in 1890 in Tekoa, Washington, the bank has a growing presence in North Idaho. It opened a branch in Kellogg last September.
- Global Credit Union of Spokane plans to open a full-service branch in the Yoke's supermarket in Coeur d'Alene. When it opens in early June, the branch will employ four people. The Kellogg Global Credit Union will be the fifth Global Credit Union branch in Idaho.
- For six weeks in late winter, Kellogg hosted a film production crew shooting a low-budget horror movie. "Shredder" is a snowboarding horror flick, so much of the action was set on Silver Mountain Resort. Motels and restaurants welcomed the extra dollars brought by the film crews, and a few locals worked as extras on the movie.
- This summer, Superfund projects will provide 200 to 300 jobs for Silver Valley residents. One familiar summer Superfund activity is remediation of lawns. Since 1994, crews have removed contaminated soil from hundreds of homes and replaced it with new soil. This spring, workers will begin final capping of the impoundment area that holds most of the contamination removed from the 21-square-mile Superfund site. In addition, crews will be planting more grass, shrubs, and trees. The Superfund projects endeavor to remove a century's accumulation of mining and smelter waste. The completion of the Superfund project will improve the county's long-term potential for tourism and industrial recruitment.

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